

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 283803

NODIS

CHEROKEE FOR AMBASSADOR ONLY

FOL RPT GENEVA 9200 ACTION SECSTATE 18 NOV QUOTE

S E C R E T GENEVA 9200

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM REINHARDT

DEPT PASS LONDON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR RH UK

SUBJ: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: DEADLOCK WORSENS

1. I CALLED ON IVOR RICHARD AT 10:45 LOCAL TIME, NOVEMBER 18. RICHARD TOLD ME THAT HE HAD BEEN ON THE PHONE THREE TIMES YESTERDAY EVENING WITH SALIM AFTER I LEFT HIM TO DISCUSS DIFFERENT FORMULAS WHICH WOULD PERMIT NYERERE AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO ACCEPT THE BRITISH POSITION ON BEGINNING AND ENDING THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION. RICHARD MADE NO PROGRESS WITH SALIM BUT TOLD SALIM IN CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL TERMS BRITAIN

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COULD ONLY FIX A DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE WHICH WAS LOOSE

ENOUGH TO ENSURE ELECTIONS ARE HELD. RICHARD ASSUMES THAT SALIM HAS REPORTED THE FIRMNESS OF THE BRITISH POSITION TO NYERERE. SALIM ADMITTED TO RICHARD THAT NYERERE HAD, IN FACT, CHANGED HIS POSITION.

2. NKOMO AND MUGABE MET RICHARD THIS MORNING AND RICHARD DISCUSSED WITH THEM A CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT WHICH WOULD MEET THEIR POINT THAT NO CLOSING DATE FOR THE CONFERENCE HAS BEEN SET. THE TEXT RICHARD WORKED FROM IS AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT

HAVING CONSULTED A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS, I HAVE DOUNED A GENERAL WISH FOR THE CONFERENCE TO SET ITSELF A TARGET DATE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF ITS WORK. I HAVE THEREFORE DECIDED TO ORGANISE THE REMAINDER OF THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE IN SUCH A WAY AS TO FINISH BY 20 DECEMBER 1976. SO FAR AS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ARE CONCERNED, FIXING THAT TARGET DATE WILL NOT PREJUDICE THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE. IT REMAINS HMG'S FIRM POSITION THAT THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE, AS DESCRIBED IN MY STATEMENT OF 15 NOVEMBER, SHOULD BE NOT LATER THAN 1 MARCH 1978. BEFORE THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONFERENCE AND AFTER AGREEING ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, THE CONFERENCE WILL REVERT TO THE QUESTION OF FIXING A DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE SO THAT A FIRM DATE CAN BE AGREED UPON.

END TEXT

3. NKOMO LOOKED AS IF HE WISHED TO ACCEPT THE BRITISH POSITION BUT MUGABE SAID "IS THAT ALL?" AND WENT ON TO SAY THE BRITISH HAD DISREGARDED THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S INSISTENCE THAT DECEMBER 1, 1977 BE ACCEPTED AS THE DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE. NKOMO AND MUGABE AGREED TO GIVE THE BRITISH A REPLY TODAY. JUST BEFORE BREAKING, NKOMO ASKED WHEN THE BRITISH WOULD HOLD THE PLENARY SESSION ON THIS SUBJECT. RICHARD SAID THAT HE HAD HOPED ONE WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY BUT DID NOT RULE OUT THE

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POSSIBILITY.

4. AS HE LEFT, NKOMO SAID TO DUFF THAT "I'LL TRY TO BE IN TOUCH, PERHAPS BY TELEPHONE." NKOMO HAS NEVER CALLED ON THE BRITISH EXCEPT IN MUGABE'S PRESENCE.

5. RICHARD ALSO TOLD ME THAT THE NEW TANZANIAN POSITION HAS BEEN PICKED UP BY THE OTHER OBSERVERS.

ANYAOKU, THE COMMONWEALTH - NIGERIAN REPRESENTATIVE, HAS BACKED SALIM'S DEMARCHE AS HAS CHONA. DUNSTAN KAMANA OF ZAMBIA CALLED RICHARD THIS MORNING TO SAY THAT KUANDA HAD INFORMED THE ZAMBIAN OBSERVERS THAT HE FOUND THE BRITISH POSITION LOGICAL BUT HOPED THAT SOME WAY COULD BE DEVELOPED WHICH WOULD AVERT THE DEADLOCK. RICHARD TOLD KAMANA THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT CANNOT ACCEPT MARCH 1, 1978 AS A DATE OF INDEPENDENCE UNLESS IT IS CLEAR THAT THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.

6. RICHARD'S POSITION WAS CONFIRMED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON NOVEMBER 17 AND RICHARD GAVE ME THE TEXT WHICH IS AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT

MR CRONIN: WILL MY RIGHT HON FRIEND CONFIRM THAT, IN SPITE OF THE PRESSURE TO ADVANCE THE INDEPENDENCE DATE, IT IS STILL HIS POLICY THAT IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL INDEPENDENCE BE GRANTED OTHER THAN TO A GOVT CONSTITUTIONALLY ELECTED, WITH A PROPER MANDATE?

MR CROSLAND: YES, SIR., I CONFIRM THAT THAT IS OUR INTENTION. INDEED, THE FACT THAT WE HAVE STUCK TO THAT INTENTION HAS BEEN ONE OF THE COMPLICATIONS IN THE DISAGREEMENTS OF THE LAST FEW DAYS. NEVERTHELESS, WE CANNOT ALLOW OURSELVES IN PARLIAMENT TO BE PUT INTO A POSITION WHERE WE ARE LEGALISING WHAT IS STILL AN ILLEGAL REGIME.

END TEXT.

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7. THE BRITISH DELEGATION HAVE NO INSTRUCTIONS YET FROM LONDON. ASSUMING THAT NKOMO AND MUGABE DO NOT ACCEPT THE LATEST BRITISH FORMULATION WHICH IS LIKELY, RICHARD WILL BE FACED WITH AN AWKWARD CHOICE. HE COULD TRY TO "SOLDIER ON" AND DEEP THE CONFERENCE GOING BY DISCUSSING THE FORMATION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT WITH MUZOREWA, SITHOLE AND THE RHODESIANS. ALTERNATIVELY, HE COULD CALL FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE CONFERENCE WHICH WOULD PROVIDE TIME FOR EVERYONE TO REFLECT AND CONSULT ON HOW TO PROCEED.

8. WITHOUT PREJUDGING THE RESULTS OF THIS AFTERNOON'S MEETINGS WITH NKOMO AND MUGABE, RICHARD BELIEVES THAT HE WILL HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ADJOURN THE CONFERENCE IF NKOMO AND MUGABE DO NOT CHANGE THEIR POSITION.

HE CANNOT SEE HOW THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT CAN BE DISCUSSED WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF TWO DELEGATIONS.

9. THE BRITISH HAVE NOT FULLY DEVELOPED, NOR HAS LONDON COMMENTED, ON A STRATEGY DURING AN ADJOURNMENT. ON A MOST INFORMAL AND PRELIMINARY BASIS, RICHARD AND HIS COLLEAGUES BELIEVE THAT THEY SHOULD CALL FOR THE ADJOURNMENT AND NOT LEAVE THE INITIATIVE IN THE HANDS OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. IF THEY FORCE NKOMO AND MUGABE TO CALL FOR ADJOURNMENT, THEY FACE THE RISK OF BRITAIN BEING ATTACKED FOR HAVING BROUGHT THE CONFERENCE TO AN IMPASSE AND WILL THEREBY REDUCE BRITAIN'S AND OUR ABILITY TO RECONVENE THE CONFERENCE UNDER MORE FAVORABLE CIRCUMSTANCES.

10. THE BRITISH ARE PROCEEDING ON THE BASIS OF FOUR ASSUMPTIONS WHICH WE DISCUSSED.

A. ANY NEW ATTEMPT TO REACH A SETTLEMENT WILL DEPEND ON THE ATTITUDE OF THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS. THEY MUST MAKE THEIR MINDS UP ON HOW TO PROCEED AND THERE MUST BE ADEQUATE TIME FOR THE BRITISH AND OURSELVES TO CONSULT WITH THEM. THE PRESIDENTS MUST ALSO HAVE TIME TO MEET AGAIN AND SORT OUT THEIR POSITION.

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B. THE CONFERENCE SHOULD NOT BE RECONVENED UNTIL BASIC "NEW CONDITIONS EXIST" WHICH WILL PERMIT THE CONFERENCE TO REACH A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION.

C. THE ADJOURNMENT AND THE CONSULTATIONS WHICH FOLLOW IN AFRICA MUST BE HANDLED SO AS TO KEEP SMITH ON BOARD. THE BRITISH WILL RELY HEAVILY ON US IN THIS REGARD AND COUNT ON OUR SUPPORT IN PRETORIA AND SALISBURY.

D. THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LAST WEEKS IN GENEVA HAVE CONVINCED THE BRITISH THAT MUGABE AND HIS GROUP ARE DETERMINED TO SETTLE FOR NOTHING LESS THAN THEIR MAXIMUM CONDITIONS. IT IS DIFFICULT, THEREFORE, TO SEE HOW THE CONFERENCE CAN BE RECONVENED AND PROCEED UNLESS NKOMO JOINS MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE IN RENEWED DELIBERATIONS. IN SHORT, AN NKOMO-MUGABE SPLIT MAY BE A PRECONDITION OF A NEW CONFERENCE.

11. IT GORS WITHOUT SAYING THAT DURING ANY PERIOD OF ADJOURNMENT THE BRITISH WOULD COUNT ON US TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN SUPPORTING THEIR INITIATIVES IN THE FRONT LINES STATES, ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA, AS WELL AS IN PRETORIA

AND SALISBURY. IT WOULD BE THE OBJECTIVE OF THESE CONSULTATIONS TO PRODUCE A SUFFICIENTLY AGREED FRAME-
WORK FOR RECONVENING THE CONFERENCE THAT WOULD GUARANTEE THE CONFERENCE EVENTUAL SUCCESS. FOR THIS REASON THE BRITISH ARE NOT INCLINED TO SET A FIXED DATE FOR RE-
ASSEMBLING THE CONFERENCE. THEY AND WE WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER A NEW VENUE FOR THE CONFERENCE WOULD BE GENEVA OR SOME OTHER LOCATION. FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS IT MAY EVENTUALLY PROVE NECESSARY TO MEET ELSEWHERE.

12. COMMENT: RICHARD IS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT NKOMO WILL BE ABLE TO PERSUADE MUGABE TO ACCEPT THE REVISED BRITISH POSITION. IN VIEW OF MUGABE'S INTRANSIGENCE, HE DOES NOT SEE WHAT FURTHER GROUND HE CAN GIVE WITHOUT DESTROYING THE BRITISH POSITION. BASED ON WHAT I HAVE OBSERVED IN GENEVA, I AM INCLINED TO SHARE RICHARD'S PESSIMISM. I SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT RICHARD'S THINKING ON THE PROPOSED BRITISH STRATEGY FOR ADJOURNMENT IS VERY REPEAT VERY PRELIMINARY. I AM PROVIDING RICHARD'S

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THOUGHTS AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR YOUR THINKING AND ADVICE TO US ON HOW YOU WISH ME TO PROCEED.

13. WE ARE IN RECEIPT OF IBADAN'S 0844 WHICH CONFIRMS WHAT WE LEARNED LAST NIGHT. I DISCUSSED THE MESSAGE WITH RICHARD AND ASSUME IT WILL BE ANSWERED FROM WASHINGTON.ABRAMS

UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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NNN

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